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Land Revenue Administration

Recommendation of the Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee regarding standardization of assessment on ryotwari lands.

* 792 *Q.*—Mr. M. B. Rangaswami Reddi: Will the Hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to state what action was taken by the Government on the recommendation of the Indian Taxation Enquiry Committee to standardize the rate of assessment on ryotwari lands at a comparatively low figure not exceeding 25 per cent of the annual value as defined by that Committee?

A.—The Committee's recommendation was as follows:—

The land revenue should be standardized at a comparatively low rate, not exceeding 25 per cent of the annual value (though this rate would initially tend to conform to the existing pitch of the assessment), so as to give greater scope for local taxation of land, which might be increased up to 4 annas in the rupee on the standard rate of land revenue assessment; over and above this, special assessments should be imposed for special local improvements. The Committee contemplated the introduction of local legislation to give effect to the recommendation. In view of the failure which had attended the attempts of this Government to place the assessment of land revenue on a statutory basis, the Government considered it impossible to bring the recommendation into effect.

Settlement operations in the Kurnool district.

* 793 *Q.*—Mr. A. Ramakrishna Reddi: Will the Hon. the Member for Revenue be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have appointed a settlement officer to carry on settlement operations in the Kurnool district; and

(*b*) whether the Government intend to put the new settlement rates into force on the completion of the settlement operations?

A.—(*a*) A settlement officer has been appointed to make enquiries for the purpose of preparing a scheme report.

(*b*) A decision as to whether the rates will be revised, and if so what those rates shall be, can be taken only after the scheme report has been prepared and published, and the views of the Board of Revenue and the people of the district on the scheme report have been ascertained and considered. The new settlement rates will ordinarily be brought into force at the beginning of the new settlement period unless for special reasons the Government postpone their immediate introduction.

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Mr. A. Ramakrishna Reddi:—"May I know, Sir, what the special reasons are for which the Government may postpone the introduction of the new settlement rates?"

The Hon. Sir Archibald Campbell:—"I am afraid, Sir, I cannot say that now."

Mr. A. Ramakrishna Reddi:—"The answer to clause (*b*) says: 'the new settlement rates will ordinarily be brought into force at the beginning of the new settlement period unless for special reasons the Government postpone their immediate introduction.' I want to know the nature of the special reasons for which the Government may postpone the introduction."

The Hon. Sir Archibald Campbell:—"There is generally no question of postponement, unless any special circumstances require a consideration of the question of their immediate introduction."

Mr. A. Ramakrishna Reddi:—"If, Sir, the new settlement rates are in excess of the present rates, will not the Government consider that as a special reason for postponing the introduction of the settlement rates in view of the economic depression?"

The Hon. Sir Archibald Campbell:—"Certainly not, Sir."

Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar:—"It is said in the answer that legislation was contemplated to give effect to the recommendation of the Committee. May I take it, Sir, that the idea of the Government was really to fix the assessment at 25 per cent of the annual value?"

The Hon. Sir Archibald Campbell:—"May I point out, Sir, that this question of the hon. Member refers to question No. 792? We are now dealing with question No. 793."

Prisons and Prisoners

Alleged hunger-strike of Dr. K. V. Swami, a prisoner confined in the Central Jail at Salem.

* 794 *Q.*—Mr. K. A. Nachiappa Gounder: Will the Hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that one Dr. K. V. Swami who is now undergoing imprisonment in Salem Jail is going on hunger-strike;

(*b*) what the reasons are therefor;

(*c*) when and for what offences he was committed to prison and by whom he was sentenced to undergo imprisonment and to what period;

(*d*) in which jail or jails he was so far kept and what the period of his stay in each is;

(*e*) whether it is a fact that he was allowed wheat diet in other jails; and

(*f*) whether it is a fact that he was refused that kind of diet in Salem jail, and, if so, what the reasons are therefor?